New Fiction

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created for itself a world without illusions, a world from which the war stripped its romance, and from this it must find release. Like Sinclair Lewis, whose cynicism is used merely to drape what is really a romantic story, Fitzgerald in what he calls his "earlier manner" was struggling to break through life as he saw it, to create a thing more alluring; for it is the determined romantic seeking release from realism that has forced Fitzgerald to alcoholize so many of his heroes and heroines. His generation tells him that he must create real people, so he gives his characters a couple of drinks in order to make them perform without losing their mortality the infectious gimcracks his vigorous imagination dictates.

"The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" reminds us of Robert W. Chamber's fine tales in "The King in Yellow." They are not unlike these two writers. At the start Mr. Chambers had several talents, among them the ability to write fine English, a fiery imagination and a good plot sense. Perhaps now the last of these only is left. These three gifts at least Mr. Fitzgerald has, coupled, too, with a sardonic humor. Will this last preserve the other three? Whither bound, Mr. Fitzgerald? Answer requested by mail.

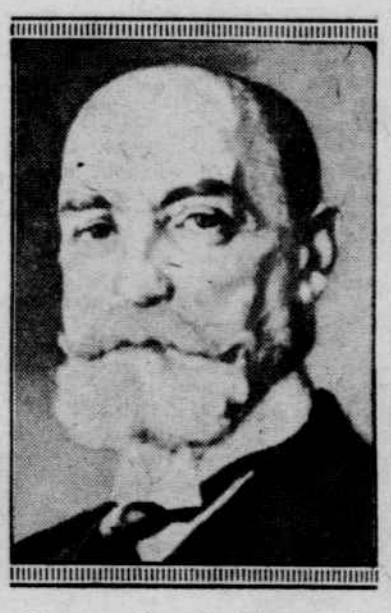
JOHN FARRAR.

THE THREE LOVERS. By Frank Swinnerton. George H. Doran Company.

THIS new story by Mr. Swinnerton lacks his customary singleness of purpose and is therefore less easy to epitomize with a comprehensive brevity. Yet he has succeeded in doing several rather difficult things that collectively go to make this volume quite as notable as its predecessors and shows a distinct gain in that special quality which Arnold Bennett once defined as his "disturbing insight into the hearts and brains of girls."

He has, to begin with, portrayed the life of the London Bohemia of the present hour, hectic, sordid, unwholesome, and on the whole not greatly different from our own American Bohemias, except in its relative sense of values. Secondly, he has studied the new freedom of woman from an angle with which Mr. Hutchinson himself could scarcely quarrel; and more specifically he has analyzed just a few individual women with a remorseless thoroughness that will make them memorable as contemporary types.

First, there is Patricia Quin, cast for the leading role, although she has not outgrown the ingenue stage. Patricia may be defined as a product of whatever remains in these outspoken days of the old fashioned sheltered life method of bringing up a girl. When in her first young maturity she finds herself an impecunious orphan with much theoretical knowledge about human wickedness, and no practical experience to fall back upon, she faces the world with a false strength based upon the possession of a hundred pounds, and a colossal belief in the importance of herself. She is Patricia Quin, the only Patricia Quin in the world, and of course fate must be kind to such an exalted personage. This is the first of Patricia's unfortunate delusions. The second is that she dangerously underrates the problem of love. It is such a simple matter, she tells herself; she does not see how any one can blunder. You either love a man or you don't; and of course you must know a little thing like that at once. So, trusting to this philosophy, Patricia plays around gayly at all kinds of parties where love—of a sort—is offered as freely as the champagne and the jazz music. Presently, after Patricia has met Harry Greenlees, a youthful Adonis with a contagious, boyish laugh, she is beset with distressing doubts because, to her dismay, she really cannot tell whether she loves him or not. According to all the old rules when a girl lets a man fall into the habit of kissing her she ought to know her own mind. But this time the rule doesn't work. One night, however, in the midst of a tete-a-tete dinner, when Patricia's doubts get the upper hand and she hysterically cries, "I can't marry you—it's too great a risk!" Harry clears the atmosphere by retorting, "Who on earth asked you to marry me?" Harry is not the marrying kind.



Maurice Francis Egan, whose "Confessions of a Booklover" has just been published by Doubleday, Page & Co.

Then, there is Monty Rosenberg, a gross, oily man, fat, forty and quite indecently rich. Monty's parties were of the famous kind that just missed being infamous; they stopped short of being drunken orgies; but they left a trail of lost reputations behind them. How the fastidious Patricia could let such a person as Monty Rosenberg lead her into her second self-deception is one of those paradoxes of feminine psychology which only an adept like Mr. Swinnerton can make convincing. In the case of Harry, she had fallen in love with love; in the case of Monty she enjoyed her sense of power. And when the man reacted according to his brutish nature and an ignominious struggle resulted the bruises which hurt were not physical; they were "bruises of her self-esteem, of the immaculate legend of Patricia Quin."

Lastly, there is Edgar Mayne, neither young nor old, substantial and self-controlled, in and out of Bohemia, but never of it. He is the only man who consistently refuses to feed Patricia's vanity. He never consents to call her wonderful or to treat her otherwise than as a child who is not yet grown up. He is the one man whom Patricia definitely decides that she does not love; so we know at the start that his chances are pretty good. And

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